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ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS IN LATIN

BY JAMES A. KLEIST, S.J.
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The advantages of the study of Latin at school can hardly be more effectively secured than by systematic attempts at original Latin composition on the part of the student. This is a truth that need not be urged upon the readers of the *Classical Journal*. That it is generally understood and appreciated throughout the country, is sufficiently proved—if proof were needed—by the popularity and comparative variety of such books in use in our high schools and colleges as deal *ex professo* with the subject of Latin writing.

As a little contribution toward stimulating interest in Latin style, the writer here ventures to present a Latin translation of Abraham Lincoln's famous address at the dedication of Gettysburg Cemetery.

Readers of the *Classical Journal* need not be expressly told that such a version—even when correct from a merely grammatical point of view—can claim no final character or absolute value, as if any version differing from it could not be of equal or even greater excellence. Translations have of necessity a strong subjective tinge, embodying as they do the subjective views of their author regarding the nature of Latin style, and the subjoined translation in particular merely shows what language the writer fancies might have been used by an educated Roman of classical times, had he been called upon to deliver the Gettysburg address.

The writer has paid special attention to the arrangement of words so characteristic of the Latin sentence. The individual words and phrases will likewise, he hopes, be found to be in good literary standing.

DEDICATION OF GETTYSBURG
CEMETERY

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.

We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who have given their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our power to add or to detract. The world will very little note nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us: that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ORATIO
GETTYSBURGENSIS

Octavus iam et octogesimus¹ annus est hic, cum maiores nostri novam in hac terrae parte rem publicam pepererunt, quam libertatis in condicione conceptam in illam consecrarunt sententiam: aequo nasci iure homines universos. Nunc vero ingenti bello civili inito nos experimur, haecne res publica vel alia, sic nata sic consecrata, per longum temporis spatium possit stare.

Convenimus in eum ipsum locum, ubi acerrime in hoc bello pugnatum est; convenimus autem huc, ut huius campi partem aliquam ad supremam quietem eorum consecrarem, qui ut viveret haec res publica, vitam hoc loco profuderunt. Quibus id nos merito ac iure praestamus.

Verum hunc locum, si altius rem spectaverimus, neque inaugurare neque dedicare neque consecrare nos posse videbimur; quem illi ipsi viri fortissimi, qui hic dimicarunt, sive mortui sunt sive superstites, tanta consecrarunt sanctitate, ut nos neque addere quicquam neque demere possimus. Nos enim, quae hic dixerimus, neque multum attendent homines neque diu recordabuntur: illi quae hic fecerunt, oblivioni dabitur nunquam.

Nos potius, qui in vita sumus, hoc loco consecrari oportet ad opus illud perficiendum, quod illi tam praeclare propagarunt; nos, inquam, consecrari ad hoc tantum opus, quod reliquum nobis videmus; ut ab illis, quos hic honoramus mortuos, maiore in dies pietate eam discamus am-

¹ *Duodenonagesimus* is not found in Latin writers.

the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

plecti causam, qua in defendenda illi hic morientes pietatem praestiterunt summam; ut magno hic animo id statuamus, ne animas illi frustra devoverint; ut huic civitati nova, Deo volente, nascatur libertas; denique ut imperium popolare, quod et a populo et pro populo administretur, ne pereat unquam in orbe terrarum.